

"things get dark," I said, "and we awaken with a worse hangover than ever before."

"I gotta begin eating in," he said.

## THE YELLOW PENCIL

I am sitting in the stands with a  
two-night, two-day hangover;  
the last night was the worst:  
white wine, red wine and  
tequila.

I am out there because I have  
evolved an astonishing  
new theory on  
how to beat the races.

the money is secondary:  
it's only used as a guideline  
to see if I am on  
the given path.

I picked up \$302  
the day before  
and I am \$265 ahead  
going into the sixth.

I can barely function  
but the new theory  
(formula K) enacts itself  
continually:  
M plus S plus C plus O  
(each brought down to  
relative powers of  
1/4 each):  
the horse with the  
lowest total is  
the winner.

it is like being inside  
one of the very secrets  
of life itself.  
when your figures tell you  
that a 2nd, 3rd or 4th  
favorite  
can beat the favorite  
and when your figures  
only select one horse,



it is a very curious and  
magic feeling, of course,  
and you learn to apply  
the same simplicities to  
other areas of existence  
but in a spiritual  
rather than the mathematical  
manner.

I have my figures ready for the  
6th race  
then I look up  
and see, well,  
there in the stands ahead of  
me  
a fellow sits upright.  
his face is smooth and  
bland.  
the physiognomy is set at  
exact zero.

he has a yellow pencil.  
he flips it over  
once  
into the air and  
catches it with  
one hand.

he does it  
again.

and again

with the same  
timing.

what is he  
doing?

he just sits there  
and continues to  
repeat the  
maneuver.

I begin to  
count:  
one two three  
four five six ...

23, 24, 25, 26,  
27 ...



his movements are  
dull and graceless,  
he reminds me of a  
factory machine.

this man is my  
enemy.

45, 46, 47, 48 ...

his face has the  
taut dead skin  
of a mounted  
ape

and I am sitting  
with my two-day  
two-night  
hangover  
watching ...

53, 54, 55 ...

this will be my  
life in hell: watching  
men like that  
sitting forever  
tossing and  
catching pencils  
with one  
hand  
in that same  
non-innovational  
rhythm ...

I am in vertigo.  
I feel a pressing  
at the temples  
as if I were going  
mad.

I can't watch  
any longer.

I get up and walk  
away from the  
seating section  
as I think,

it will never  
let go  
with the women  
you live with

or wherever you  
go  
supermarkets,  
bazaars, hang-glider  
meets. it will  
find you, maul you,  
piss over you, let  
you know  
about it  
again.  
and there will be  
nobody  
you can talk to  
about it.

I find the bar.  
the barkeep  
seems a nice enough  
fellow: little bright  
blue eyes  
and a crisp white  
shirt.

"double vodka 7,"  
I tell him.  
he nods and moves  
off.

a high-yellow in a  
see-through  
throws her  
head back and  
laughs about  
something ...

she's about three  
feet  
to the left  
so that's far  
enough.

the barkeep comes  
back with  
my drink  
asks me:  
"how's it going?"

I wink and  
slide  
the money  
toward  
him.